

church began to hold a prayer service at noon Monday through Friday, a tradition that continues today.

The church has grown as Bedford County has grown in recent years. Under the leadership of the church's current pastor, Larry James Crismon, Sr., Bright Temple has expanded its facilities and opened a community social service facility.

Shelbyville is a better place because of the work of the Bright Temple Church of God in Christ and its congregation. I congratulate Pastor Crismon and the congregation for all the good work they have done, and I wish them all the best in the next 75 years.

FREEDOM FOR RICARDO GONZALEZ ALFONSO

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2005

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, once again I rise today to speak about Ricardo Gonzalez Alfonso, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Gonzalez is the president of the Manuel Marquez Sterling Journalists Society and an independent reporter in totalitarian Cuba. Mr. Gonzalez works and writes to inform the world about the gross human rights abuses that occur every day under the repressive regime of the Cuban dictator.

Unfortunately, writing and reporting the truth is not allowed under Castro's tyrannical dictatorship. All attempts to portray the absolute lack of freedom in totalitarian Cuba are viciously condemned and their authors are imprisoned or exiled. Mr. Gonzalez has been harassed by Castro's thugs since 1997, and on March 18, 2003, he was arrested for his insistence on publishing the truth about Castro's totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Gonzalez was 53 years old when he was condemned to 20 years in Castro's gulag. The conditions in the Cuban totalitarian gulag are so atrocious as to almost guarantee that Mr. Gonzalez will not walk out if he were to have to serve the entirety of his sham sentence. Let me be very clear, Mr. Gonzalez has been sentenced to die in the gulag by the Cuban tyrant for writing the truth about Castro's brutal, repressive and disgusting regime.

Mr. Gonzalez's wife is calling for the governments of free nations, NGOs, and all those that cherish human rights to demand the release of her husband. I applaud her bravery and patriotism and join her cause. It is categorically unacceptable that men and women who demand freedom from tyranny are locked in the dungeons of monsters. The willful ignorance of Cuba's suffering under the Castro regime by much of the world's press, and most of the international community, amounts to aiding and abetting the Cuban dictatorship. Let us never forget and always support, those who are struggling to liberate their people from the grip of tyranny.

Mr. Speaker, we must cry out for the release of all those who languish in dungeons because they believe in human rights and freedom. My Colleagues, we must demand the immediate and unconditional release of Ricardo Gonzalez Alfonso and every prisoner of

conscience locked in Castro's totalitarian gulag.

TRIBUTE TO MR. VEE-JAY BRANN

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2005

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mr. Vee-Jay Brann of Hanford, California, on the occasion of his retirement as the Kings County Director of Finance.

With over 30 years of dedicated service to Kings County, Mr. Brann has demonstrated quality leadership alongside committed service to the residents of his community and the people of California.

Named after the day on which he was born, VJ Day, Vee-Jay grew up in the small Wisconsin town of Algoma. Upon graduation from Wisconsin State University Oshkosh with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration in 1968, Mr. Brann entered the United States Air Force.

The great lure of the San Joaquin Valley drew Mr. Brann and he settled in Hanford. Mr. Brann continued his career as a Job Training Specialist until he became the Assistant Treasurer/Tax Collector for Kings County. Working diligently to create a welcoming atmosphere for his superior, he as appointed to fill the post of Treasurer/Tax Collector upon her retirement in 1985. That same year, Mr. Brann was pleasantly surprised with the birth of his son David. In May 2004, Mr. Brann resigned his position as Treasurer/Tax Collector to become Kings County's first Director of Finance.

Mr. Brann has served on many professional and social committees and boards. However he is most proud of serving as president of the California Association of Treasurer/Tax Collectors and being the president of the Hanford Rotary Club.

With all of his accomplishments, Mr. Brann's greatest pride continues to be his loving wife and son, his loyal and dedicated staff and his many friends and acquaintances.

While Mr. Brann looks forward to traveling, reading or trying his hand at gourmet cooking, the residents of Hanford will always remember the charismatic Vee-Jay Brann who served the community to the best of his ability.

HONORING DUNBAR HIGH SCHOOL, WASHINGTON, DC, AND THE DUNBAR HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1955

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2005

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask the House to honor Dunbar High School, a legendary high school whose importance in American history is well known. I had the good fortune to graduate from Dunbar High School 50 years ago and my class has asked that I bring Dunbar's proud history to the attention of the House on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Class of 1955.

Dunbar High School was America's first public high school for African Americans and

rose to prominence in the era of segregation and remained segregated until 1954, when the District of Columbia was one of the six Brown v. Board of Education jurisdictions that successfully challenged segregated schools in the United States. Dunbar's excellence was so recognized and well known nationally that the best colleges and universities annually visited Dunbar to recruit students. An unusually large number of this country's most distinguished African Americans graduated from Dunbar. Among them are Edward Brooke, the first black Senator, Robert C. Weaver, the first black Cabinet member, Benjamin O. Davis, the first black general, Wesley Brown, the first black graduate of the Naval Academy, Charles R. Drew, the discoverer of blood plasma and Mary Jane Patterson, the first African American to achieve a college degree.

The 50th anniversary of the class of 1955 is another occasion for pride in our class and in our alma mater. Pride and gratitude as graduates of Dunbar High School, which prepared us so well for life and career. Pride in graduating from the first public high school in the United States for African Americans. Pride in Dunbar's storied history of educating so many African Americans who have made notable contributions to society. Pride that our alma mater encourages today's students to strive for the same excellence Dunbar encouraged in our class. And pride that we can celebrate magnificent, irreplaceable, and lasting memories of the fun and fellowship we shared together.

For all these reasons and more, I take special pleasure in congratulating our class, Dunbar High School Class of 1955, on our 50th anniversary. I ask the House to join me in congratulating the Class of 1955 and in recognizing the historic achievements on Dunbar High School itself.

ON RECENT COMMENTS OF THE IRANIAN PRESIDENT, MAHMOUD AHMADINEJAD

HON. JAMES A. LEACH

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2005

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, every society has a historian who suggests that failure to study history is an invitation to repeat its mistakes. With his recent utterances, the newly elected president of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, may be presenting the world with a more dangerous conundrum. He has apparently looked at history and denied it, which requires each of us to come to grips with preposterousness as an international reality. To refuse to study history may invite repetition; but to deny it, particularly when it involves the greatest crime in human history, is an assault on civilized values and portends an attack on civilization itself.

Last week, President Ahmadinejad suggested that the murder of six million European Jews by the Nazis did not occur and called for Israel to be "wiped off the map." This week, after time to reconsider, he made it perfectly clear that he did not flippantly, accidentally or remorsefully express a misunderstanding. He again publicly denied the Holocaust, calling it a "myth" designed to be "above God, religion and the prophets."

Condemning such vitriol is important, but insufficient. Anti-semitism demands rebuttal; but the stakes here are not just one man's prejudice. At issue is the legitimacy and viability of the Israeli state. The United States in this circumstance has no moral option except to make unequivocally clear that Israel's survival is a bedrock American commitment.

There can and should be a role and place for a Palestinian state in the Middle East. But there never should be a question about the legitimacy of Israel. Peaceful coexistence is impossible if irrational aspirations such as those flaunted by President Ahmadinejad are perceived as realistic options.

It is false and counter-productive to think that Jewish-Muslim history begins after the Holocaust or that the rationale for a Jewish state comes exclusively from the Shoah. While the holocaust stamps a moral imprimatur on modern Israel, the cause of Israel's statehood predates the world's most capricious act of inhumanity.

The conflict that has emerged around the establishment of an Israeli state involves a multicentury exodus of a people from their homeland. But while the Bible is punctuated with wars and traumas, it is impressive how doing most of the last several millennia, Jews and Muslims have faced less hostility than Jews living in predominantly Christian countries.

Since biblical times, Jewish communities have thrived without interruption in Arab lands, in Persia and in historical Palestine. When Islam arrived in the Middle East in 633 A.D., intermarriage and even conversion were not uncommon. In fact, throughout the Middle East Jews experienced less Persecution and discrimination than they did in Europe. In Palestine, for instance, Muslims repeatedly protected their Jewish neighbors from European crusaders; in one instance at least, Jews fought alongside Muslims to prevent crusaders from landing in Haifa; and Saladin, after reconquering Jerusalem from the crusaders, invited Jews back into the city.

The Jews in Spain under Moorish rule flourished and experienced a renaissance mirroring that of the great Islamic civilization and culture at the time. As Christianity spread from the north of Spain, Jews were again protected by Muslim rulers until the fall of Granada—the last Moorish kingdom to pass into Christian hands—when both Jews and Muslims were expelled at the end of the 15th century. Most of the Jews from the Iberian peninsula settled in North Africa and the lands under Ottoman rule and continued their largely peaceful coexistence with Muslims in those countries.

What should be taken from this history is not that there is no case for an Israeli state in the Holy Land, but that individuals of the Jewish and Muslim faiths have a long record of successfully living together respecting each other's beliefs and culture. Yes, President Ahmadinejad, there is a Western responsibility to help and defend Israel. But there is an Eastern imperative to enhance the prospect of a more dignified life for all people in the region.

What should also be taken from the history of the last two millennia is that the Jewish people generally found themselves in a position of vulnerability precisely because they lacked a state of their own. Relations within the Muslim world were usually better than within most parts of the Christian world, but

dependency and the potential of violence characterized inter-faith power relationships. Security was always in doubt.

In this historical context, the case for a Jewish state is profound. The only thing that comes from statements like those of President Ahmadinejad is less respect for Iranian leadership, more distrust between peoples, and abundant concerns that violence will accelerate.

History is an accumulated product to which each generation adds. If any generation allows acts of hatred to become the dominant theme of interpersonal relations, it is harder for the next to break out of an angry memory cycle. Thus the challenge in the Middle East today is to give harmony a chance, recognizing that current Jewish-Muslim tension is an aberration. Peace is the historical norm.

Because the past is often more controversial and volatile than current events, it is essential that we study history both from our own perspective and that of others. Denial is not simply obtuse; it is hate inspiring. Iran and the world, deserve better.

H. RES. 597, RECOGNIZING AND CONGRATULATING DON HO ON HIS CAREER IN MUSIC

HON. NEIL ABERCROMBIE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2005

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker,

Whereas Don Ho is one of Hawaii's and the world's best known and most beloved musical performers;

Whereas Don Ho has entertained and shared Hawaii's Aloha Spirit with millions of visitors to the State and others around the world;

Whereas, after being discharged from the United States Air Force, Don Ho received his start in show business at Honey's cocktail lounge in Kaneohe, Hawaii;

Whereas in 1962, Don Ho began performing at Duke's in Waikiki, which became his home venue;

Whereas Don Ho has for years been backed by the five Aliis playing piano, drums, guitars, xylophone, and other instruments;

Whereas Don Ho's fame and popularity has earned him triumphant engagements at the Coconut Grove in Hollywood, the Sands in Las Vegas, Harrah's at Lake Tahoe, the Palmer House in Chicago, the Americana Hotel's Royal Box in New York;

Whereas, Don Ho has made guest television guest appearances with Johnny Carson, Joey Bishop and Art Linkletter

Be it Resolved that the House of Representatives:

(1) Congratulates Don Ho on his splendid career;

(2) Recognizes Don Ho for his efforts to share Hawaii's Aloha Spirit with his audiences and others around the world; and

(3) Conveys its best wishes for continuing success in his musical career.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor my old friend for his impressive musical career and his iconic status as the undisputed king of Waikiki entertainers.

For over 40 years Don Ho has entertained audiences in Waikiki, sharing his Aloha Spirit

by singing "Tiny Bubbles" as well as his other favorite songs. He casts a spell on audiences through his blend of trademark humor, charm and vocal talents. He continues to mesmerize audiences today.

Don Ho's magical persona captures audiences' enthusiasm with each performance through laughter and song. He is charismatic and personable, and he converses with everyone like there's no one else in the room. He is a beloved son of Hawaii, and I look forward to his next performance at the Waikiki Beachcomber. Much love and aloha to Don and his family.

A TRIBUTE TO JOHN KELLY

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, December 17, 2005

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to John Kelly, a constituent of mine from Burlingame, California, who has been working to make our community a better place since the 1970's. Mr. Kelly has recently been awarded the Thomas Jefferson Award for his work as the former executive director of Samaritan House and as a volunteer at San Quentin State Prison.

Mr. Kelly has lived and worked around the Bay Area for most of his life. He began his community involvement as a Catholic priest, but left to become a teacher at Serra and Menlo Atherton high schools for 18 years. In 1985, he was hired by the county of San Mateo to merge Samaritan House, then a referral service in San Mateo for low income residents, with a nonprofit meal program.

Mr. Speaker, under John's stewardship, Samaritan House expanded to serve throughout San Mateo County, with a 90-bed shelter, a medical clinic, and provides food, clothing and counseling. Mainly through donations, Samaritan House provides assistance to approximately 12,000 residents.

In 1991, Mr. Kelly began a program for inmates at San Quentin State Prison called Kairos, a three-day workshop with spiritual talks, singing and discussions. He visits the prison weekly, attending mass and leading spiritual discussions with the hope of trying to change even the hardest of criminals. He has done just that with many prisoners, some who have gotten out of prison have gone to school in an effort to make John proud.

Mr. Speaker, John Kelly is one of those unique people who work tirelessly to make their community's better. I wish there were more John Kelly's in the world, and I am just so pleased that he is one of my neighbors. I once again ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to this extraordinary individual.

IN HONOR OF THE LIFE OF SENATOR WILLIAM PROXMIRE

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, December 17, 2005

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and remembrance of Senator William Proxmire. For over three decades, Senator